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FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PREPARED BY

STATE DOCUMENTS

STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

FOR

PROJECT F 268(7)

RYEGATE - EAST

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

1981

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THIS HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT IS PROPOSED FOR FUNDING
UNDER TITLE 23, U.S.C. THIS STATEMENT FOR THE
IMPROVEMENT WAS DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH
THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION AND IS
SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO:

SECTION 102(2)(C)
PUBLIC LAW 91-190

H. J. ANDERSON, DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

Date 12-22-71 By Lack R. Beckert
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR,
ENGINEERING DIVISION

REVIEWED FOR CONTENT AND ACCEPTED BY FEDERAL
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Date _____ By _____
RALPH M. PHILLIPS
F.H.W.A. REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this statement is to show, in a systematic manner, the effects that this project will have on the human environment.



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SUMMARY

I. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

- () Draft (X) Final
- (X) Environmental Statement
- () Combination Environmental/Section 4(f) Statement

II. DESCRIPTION

This project will connect a point on U.S. Highway No. 12 just east of Ryegate, Montana, with a point on U.S. 12 approximately four miles west of Lavina. The entire project lies within Golden Valley County. The total length of the project is approximately 12.2 miles. The project will provide the public with a 34-foot wide roadway with two 12-foot traffic lanes.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

A. Probable Impact

The project will provide faster and more efficient transportation for the farmer and rancher in transporting his products to market. The existing character of the area should not be significantly altered due to this project, and no families will be displaced.

While there will be some minor effects on the environment during construction such as minor changes in traffic flow and property access, slightly increased noise and air pollution, the effects should not be significant. There should be no appreciable effect on water pollution or wildlife. The acquisition of right-of-way for this project should not appreciably affect the local tax base.

B. Adverse Environmental Impacts which cannot be avoided

The minimal air and noise pollution and the acquisition of right-of-way mentioned above are unavoidable if this project is constructed.

IV. ALTERNATIVES

Four alternate routes were studied for this project, with Alternate No. 1 being the proposed route for this project. In addition to the alternate routes hereafter known as Alternates No. 2, 3, and 4, the "do-nothing" alternative exists.

A. Alternate No. 1

Alternate No. 1, the selected route for this project, would follow generally along the present road in the river valley, deviating from it in order to flatten curves, improve alignment, and increase sight distance. This route would have a new railroad underpass and would be about 12.2 miles long.

B. Alternate No. 2

Alternate No. 2 would follow the same route as Alternate No. 1 approximately 5.9 miles, then Alternate No. 2 would proceed north of and parallel to the present road, in an easterly direction, then rejoin Alternate No. 1 near its eastern terminus. This route has a length of about 11.9 miles, and would involve the construction of a new railroad overpass.

C. Alternate No. 3

Alternate No. 3 would follow the same route as Alternate No. 1 about 3.56 miles, then proceed northeasterly about 1.6 miles, easterly 1.7 miles, then south and easterly to rejoin Alternates 1 and 2. A length of about 12.0 miles and a railroad overpass characterize this route.

D. Alternate No. 4

Alternate No. 4 would follow the same route as Alternate No. 3 about 7 miles, then would proceed northeasterly about 2.3 miles, then southeasterly about 2.3 miles to rejoin Alternate No. 3. Alternate No. 4

would have a length of about 12.1 miles and a railroad overpass.

E. The "Do-Nothing" Alternative

One alternative to the proposed project is to not construct the project. This would not fulfill the basic responsibility of providing safer and more efficient transportation for the traveling public. This project is designed to provide fast, safe, and efficient transportation for local and through traffic. The present highway is substandard with regard to present use and future demands to be imposed upon it.

The 1969 Sufficiency Rating of Montana Primary Highways rates this section of highway between 0 and 40%. According to the study, roads with this sufficiency rating are in a critical category and should be constructed immediately.

Ryegate and the surrounding area is mainly dependent upon the road system for transportation, which is comprised of state primary and secondary roads and county roads, with all roads maintained and open year-round to traffic. The C.M.S.T.P. & P. Railroad provides service to Ryegate for freight only. The Burlington Northern, Inc. Railroad crosses the C.M.S.T.P. & P. line approximately seven miles east of Ryegate, but no access to the train is provided at that point. There is no bus line passenger service available at Ryegate. The airport at Ryegate is unsurfaced, of the sod type, so no commercial air passenger service is available other than chartered airplanes. Short-distance modes of transportation in the area include bicycles, motorcycles, snow-mobiles, and horses.

V. DISTRIBUTION

A. Federal, State, and Local Agencies and Other Organizations from which comments were requested.

Department of Agriculture
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco, California 94111

Bureau of Sport Fisheries & Wildlife
(DOI) P.O. Box 3737
730 N.E. Pacific Street
Portland, Oregon 97232

U.S. Forest Service
Federal Building
Missoula, Montana 59801

National Park Service (DOI)
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 69102

Economic Development Administration
415 First Avenue North
Seattle, Washington 98109

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (DOI)
Room 407, U.S. Courthouse
Seattle, Washington 98104

Weather Bureau
P.O. Box 11188, Federal Building
125 South State Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Bureau of Land Management
Federal Building
316 North 26th Street
Billings, Montana 59101

Office of Civil Defense
Federal Regional Center
Bothell, Washington 98011

Geological Survey Topography Div.
Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

Corps of Engineers
Missouri River Division
Division Engineer
U.S. Army Engineer Div.,
Missouri River
P.O. Box 10 (Downtown Station)
Omaha, Nebraska 68101

Geological Survey
Water Resources Div.
Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare
9017 Federal Office Building
19th and Stout Street
Denver, Colorado 80202

Bureau of Reclamation
Region Six
Billings, Montana 59103

Soil Conservation Service
P.O. Box 418
Roundup, Montana 59072

Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
Room 226, Arcade Plaza Building
Seattle, Washington 98101

Environmental Protection Agency
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

Indian Health Service
3 7th Street West
(or P.O. Box 2143)
Billings, Montana 59103

Bureau of Mines
Intermountain Field Operations Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

Federal Water Quality Administration
Northwest Region
Room 501, Pittock Block
Portland, Oregon 97205

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Helena, Montana 59601

Director
Montana Fish & Game Department
Helena, Montana 59601

Council on Natural Resources & Development
425 Sam W. Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Golden Valley County Commissioners
Ryegate, Montana 59074

Montana Aeronautics Commission
P.O. Box 1698
Helena, Montana 59601

School Board
District 6 and 1
Ryegate, Montana 59074

Rural Electrification Administration
Montana Associated Utilities
Rainbow Western Hotel
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Agricultural Stabilization & Research
Service
112 West 13th Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601

Director,
State Department of Health
Helena, Montana 59601

Department of Planning & Economic Development
Capitol Post Office
Helena, Montana 59601

State Forester
2705 Spurgin Road
Missoula, Montana 59801

School Board
District 41-M and 2
Lavina, Montana 59046

Montana Water Resources Board
Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Federal Power Commission
555 Battery Street
San Francisco, California 94111

Dr. T. C. Berly
Office of Secretary of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 98109

Mr. Ole Ueland, Executive Secretary
State Soil Conservation Committee
Capitol Station
Helena, Montana 59601

Board of Supervisors
Lower Musselshell Soil Conservation Dist.
Roundup, Montana 59072

Postmaster
Ryegate, Montana 59074



B. Federal, State, and Local Agencies and Other Organizations
from which comments were received.

Director
State Department of Health
Helena, Montana 59601

Department of the Army
Omaha District, Corps of Engineers
7410 U.S. Post Office & Court House
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
Room 226, Arcade Plaza Building
Seattle, Washington 98101

Geological Survey
Water Resources Div.
Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

State Forester
2705 Spurgin Road
Missoula, Montana 59801

The Assistant Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

Indian Health Service
3 Seventh Street West
(or P.O. Box 2143)
Billings, Montana 59103

United States Dept. of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Washington, D.C. 20250

Montana Water Resources Board
Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Director
Montana Fish & Game Department
Helena, Montana 59601

Bureau of Reclamation
Region Six
Billings, Montana 59103

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Helena, Montana 59601

U.S. Forest Service
Federal Building
Missoula, Montana 59801

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (DOI)
Pacific Northwest Region
1000 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104

Bureau of Mines
Intermountain Field Operations Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

Environmental Protection Agency
Region VIII
Suite 900, 1860 Lincoln Street
Denver, Colorado 80203

Board of Supervisors
Lower Musselshell Soil Conservation Dist.
Roundup, Montana 59072

VI. DATE DRAFT STATEMENT AVAILABLE TO CEQ = June 18, 1971.

I. A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project will connect a point on U.S. Highway No. 12 just east of Ryegate, Montana, with a point on U.S. 12 approximately four miles west of Lavina. Stage construction will be employed on this project. The first stage will have a 34-foot paved surface and will be constructed with a subgrade to accommodate a 40-foot roadway at some time in the future. The total length of the project is approximately 12.2 miles. The length of the proposed project and the length of the present road are essentially the same. The first portion to be constructed is approximately 6.2 miles long.

This project will provide the traveling public with a 34-foot wide roadway with two 12-foot traffic lanes. The present road is 24 feet wide. The projected average daily traffic for 1974 is 1105 vehicles/day and for 1994 is 2200 vehicles/day with 21.9% commercial truck use, 15.7% pickup truck use, and 62.4% automobile use. The traffic two years after completion is estimated to be approximately 1270 vehicles/day.

The average existing right-of-way width is 100 feet. This project will require a minimum of 80 feet of right-of-way on each side of the centerline of the roadway.

The only major structure required along this route is a railroad underpass at Station 1247+50. Bridges over drainages will be provided where needed. Access control on the new road will be similar to that on the existing road. No materials will be taken from streams for the construction of this project.

B. PROJECT HISTORY

Construction of this project should begin about July, 1974, in accordance with present priorities and if funds are available. Preliminary engineering for

this project was approved in December, 1969. A location route study was made and a Draft Environmental Statement prepared and distributed in June, 1971. A public hearing was held in July, 1971, at which the majority of those present endorsed Alternate No. 1. At their regular session in September, 1971, the Montana Highway Commission approved Alternate No. 1 as the recommended alternate. Location approval will soon be requested.

C. DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING PROJECT ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND USE

The land to the south of segment AB (See Exhibit C, Irrigation and Drainage Map) is mainly utilized as dry crop and irrigated cropland. To the north of segment AB is mainly irrigated cropland or pasture. Grazing land is on the south and north of segment BHL (See Exhibit B, Map of Alternates). Grazing land is on the north and grazing and cropland is on the south of segment KLJFM. Irrigated land is mainly to the south.

No major changes in land use patterns are expected to result as a consequence of this project.

2. TERRAIN

The land along segment AB and along segment HKLJFM is relatively flat ground located along the Musselshell River Valley. Between points L and M is a stretch of high rock cliffs on the north side of the present highway.

3. SOILS

The soils in the bottom of the Musselshell River Valley are mainly silt loam or sandy loam to a depth of 24 to 48 inches, with underlying sand or gravel providing adequate drainage.

The soils on the upland benches paralleling the river valley have been derived from fine grained sandstones and sandy or silty shales.¹

1. Water Resources Survey, Golden Valley County, Montana, Part I (Helena, Montana: State Engineer's Office, July, 1949), p. 9.

4. CLIMATE

Golden Valley County has a semi-arid climate with abundant sunshine, low relative humidity, moderate winds, low precipitation, wide daily and seasonal variations of temperature, and a relatively short growing season. The summer has hot days and cool nights. Moderately cold winters are frequently broken by long periods of mild weather. An eight-year record of weather conditions at Ryegate (elevation 3,640 feet) shows an average annual precipitation of 14.82 inches. The heaviest precipitation is received in May and June. Killing frosts have occurred June 3 and August 25.

The average maximum temperature is about 60 degrees F. with the average minimum temperature about 28 degrees F. Temperatures as high as plus 109 degrees F. and as low as minus 49 degrees F. have occurred. Prevailing winds are from the west. ²

5. POPULATION

This project is in Golden Valley County, near the county seat of Ryegate which has a population of 261. The project goes through an extremely sparsely-populated rural area with the occupants living mainly on farms and ranches.

6. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Agricultural activities dominate the economic base of the Ryegate area. As was the case with much of the Great Plains area, the once thriving fur trade of Golden Valley County gave way to stock raising. With an abundant supply of highly nutritious native grasses and a favorable climate, the area produces mainly beef cattle and some sheep. Some of the community is engaged in supportive retail activities associated with agricultural service needs.

Ibid., pp. 8-9.

7. FISH AND WILDLIFE

a. Fishery Resources

Stream fishing is available in the Musselshell River. Some brown and rainbow trout are found, mainly in the upper reaches of the river. The lower reaches of the river provide some catfish.

b. Wildlife Resources

The Ryegate area produces mainly antelope on the benchlands, and some Mule deer and Whitetail deer in the creek and river bottoms. Some game birds such as pheasant, sharptail grouse, and sage grouse may be found along brushy creek bottomland also. Small animal species found in the area include fox, coyote, badger, mink, muskrat, and beaver.

8. HIGHWAY FACILITIES

The present highway is substandard with regard to present use and future demands to be imposed upon it. The 1969 Sufficiency Rating of Montana Primary Highways rates this section of highway between 0 and 40%. According to the study, roads with this sufficiency rating are in a critical category and should be constructed immediately.

II. PROBABLE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

A. BROAD IMPACTS

The existing character of the area should not be significantly altered due to this project. No families will be displaced due to this project.

The area residents are largely made up of agricultural families and therefore are interested in transporting products to market. In most cases, the new road will provide faster and more efficient transportation for the farmer and rancher in transporting his products to market. The long distance traveler will benefit from reduced travel time and reduced operating costs.

B. IMPACTS ON THE NARROW BAND ADJACENT TO THE PROJECT

This project will have some effect on the environment during construction, such as minor changes in traffic flow and property access, and increased noise and air pollution. However, due to the fact that this is a very sparsely populated area and due to the fact that dust control and air pollution controls will be employed on this project, as well as coordinated traffic movement during construction, the environmental impact will not be significant. Noise levels after construction should not be appreciably different from those on the present road. This project will have no appreciable effect on water pollution. Temporary and permanent erosion control methods and topsoil replacement and reseedling will be employed. If necessary, riprap along the Musselshell River will be used to prevent bank erosion and resulting water pollution.

This project should have no appreciable effect on patterns or behavior of wildlife species and wildlife breeding, nesting, or feeding grounds. Where the alignment follows the present highway, the wildlife will follow present established patterns. Where the alignment deviates from the present highway, the wildlife will develop behavioral patterns in accordance with the obstruction similar to those now followed for the present highway. The use of barbed wire will allow the passage of antelope and deer. By providing adequate drainage, ponding areas used as breeding grounds for mosquitoes will be minimized. Culverts and bridges will be used as necessary to accommodate discharges in the drainage areas.

There should be no effect on the water table. This project will provide both local and long distance traffic with a much safer route. The local

traveler along the route will benefit from having a safer and more efficient transportation route to neighboring towns and markets. Local rural traffic on either end of the route will also appreciate these benefits. Work activities will remain at a fairly stable level except for the increased activity during the construction period, and the possible increase due to the improved highway facility.

School opportunities will be enhanced by the improved highway facilities, providing for safer and faster school bus operation. Recreational and religious opportunities will be enhanced through the faster, safer, and more efficient transportation provided by the new improved facility.

Approximately eight to eleven acres of irrigated land will have to be purchased for right-of-way along the project route. This should not have any appreciable effect on the local tax base, however. As this project follows the present road, there should be no significant amount of small parcels of land segregated by the construction.

III. PROBABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED

The minimal air and noise pollution and the acquisition of right-of-way previously mentioned are unavoidable if this project is constructed.

IV. ALTERNATIVES

Four alternate routes were studied for this project, with Alternate No. 1 being the proposed route for this project. In addition to the alternate routes hereafter known as Alternates No. 2, 3, and 4, the "do-nothing" alternative exists. These five alternatives will be discussed in more detail

in the following paragraphs.

A. DESCRIPTIONS

1. ALTERNATE NO. 1

Alternate No. 1, the selected route for this project, would follow generally along the present road in the river valley, deviating from it in order to flatten curves, improve alignment, and increase sight distance. The maximum degree of curvature would be approximately $4^{\circ} 30'$, and maximum grades would be between 3% and 5%. This route, defined by points ABHKLJFM (See Exhibit B, Map of Alternates), would have a railroad underpass at point L, as the existing structure does not meet present-day width and clearance standards. This route would be about 12.2 miles long.

2. ALTERNATE NO. 2

Alternate No. 2, defined by points ABHIJFM, would follow the same route as Alternate No. 1 approximately 5.9 miles to point H where Alternate No. 2 would proceed north of and parallel to the present road, in an easterly direction. This route, which rejoins Alternate No. 1 at point J, would have a maximum degree of curvature of approximately $4^{\circ} 30'$, maximum grades of between 3% and 5%, a length of about 11.9 miles, and would involve the construction of a new railroad overpass at point I.

3. ALTERNATE NO. 3

Alternate No. 3, defined by points ABCGEFM, would follow the same route as Alternate No. 1 about 3.56 miles to point B, then proceed northeasterly about 1.6 miles, easterly 1.7 miles to point C, then south and easterly to rejoin Alternates 1 and 2 at point F. Maximum degree of curvature



of about $4^{\circ} 30'$, maximum grades between 3% and 5%, a length of about 12.0 miles, and a railroad overpass at point G characterize this route.

4. ALTERNATE NO. 4

Alternate No. 4, defined by points ABCDEFM, would follow the same route as Alternate No. 3 to point C, then would proceed northeasterly about 2.3 miles, then southeasterly about 2.3 miles to rejoin Alternate No. 3 at point E. Alternate No. 4 would have maximum degrees of curvature of about $4^{\circ} 30'$, maximum grades between 3% and 5%, a length of about 12.1 miles, and a railroad overpass at point D.

5. THE "DO-NOTHING" ALTERNATIVE

One alternate to the proposed project is to not construct the project. This would not fulfill the basic responsibility of providing safer and more efficient transportation for the traveling public. This project is designed to provide fast, safe, and efficient transportation for local and through traffic. The present highway is substandard with regard to present use and future demands to be imposed upon it.

The 1969 Sufficiency Rating of Montana Primary Highways rates this section of highway between 0 and 40%. According to the study, roads with this sufficiency rating are in a critical category and should be constructed immediately if funds are available.

Ryegate and the surrounding area is mainly dependent upon the road system for transportation which is comprised of state primary and secondary roads and county roads, with all roads maintained and open year round to traffic. The C.M.S.T.P. & P. Railroad provides rail service to Ryegate for freight only. The Burlington Northern, Inc. Railroad crosses



the C.M.S.T.P. & P. line approximately seven miles east of Ryegate, but no access to the train is provided at that point. There is no bus line passenger service available at Ryegate. The airport at Ryegate is unsurfaced, of the sod type, so no commercial air passenger service is available other than chartered airplanes. Short-distance modes of transportation in the area include bicycles, motorcycles, snow-mobiles, and horses.

B. ADDITIONAL FEATURES

1. LAND USE

The land to the south of segment AB (all alternates) is mainly utilized as dry crop and irrigated cropland. To the north of segment AB is mainly irrigated cropland or pasture.

Grazing land is on the south and north of segments BHL (on Alternate No. 1), BHIJFM (on Alternate No. 2), BCGEFM (on Alternate No. 3), and BCDEFM (on Alternate No. 4).

Grazing land is on the north and grazing and cropland is on the south of segment KLJFM (on Alternate No. 1). Irrigated land is mainly to the south of Alternate No. 1 (See Exhibit C, Irrigation and Drainage Map).

2. TERRAIN

The land along segment AB (all alternates) and along segment HKLJFM (Alternate No. 1) is relatively flat ground located along the Musselshell River Valley. Between points L and M on Alternate No. 1 is a stretch of high rock cliffs on the north side of the present highway. Between points B and F, Alternates No. 2, 3, and 4 are located in rolling sagebrush-covered prairie with few trees and occasional small peaks.



3. SERVICE TO THE AREA

Alternate No. 1 would provide the best service to the immediate area as those families living along the present highway would have about the same access as they do now. All the other alternates would be less suited to providing service to the residents along the present highway and would be principally for the benefit of the through travelers. Those portions of Alternates No. 2, 3, and 4 on new alignments would by-pass some families along the river, and the unused portion of the present road would provide the needed access for these families.

4. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE FOUR ALTERNATES

The various social, economic, and environmental effects were evaluated and a comparative analysis was made for the alternates where applicable.

a. FAST, SAFE, AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION

Through the avoidance of steep grades and sharp curves, all of the alternates would provide fast, safe, and efficient transportation for the driving public. All alternates will eliminate a very dangerous sharp curve near Careless Creek. The design speed will be 60 M.P.H.

b. NATIONAL DEFENSE

All of the alternates could be used for military vehicles. Alternate No. 1 is located on flatter terrain than the other alternates which would prove slightly superior for moving heavy equipment.

c. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The economic activity of the surrounding area would not be significantly affected except to provide faster and safer transportation. If an alternate other than Alternate No. 1 is chosen, the existing highway must be preserved and maintained along the segments that are not utilized as part of the route. This would serve the families located in the farming area now served by the existing road, such as along the river between points B and M.

d. EMPLOYMENT

Employment would not be affected in the area. All the alternates would provide safer and faster transportation for those people utilizing the road to get to their jobs.

e. RECREATION AND PARKS

There would be no effect on parks in the area due to any of the alternates and none of the alternates are considered detrimental to the existing or potential recreation features of the region.

f. FIRE PROTECTION

Alternate No. 1 would provide a faster route for firefighting equipment. If the existing route is not reconstructed, fire protection would not be hindered since this road must still be preserved to serve the area.

g. AESTHETICS

The aesthetics of the area will not be severely affect by any of the alternates. By constructing the road along the natural contour of the land, by minimizing deep cuts and fills, and by employing erosion control, adverse aesthetic features will be minimized. Revegetation with native grasses will provide consonance with the existing environment. Alternate No. 1 could result in better aesthetics than the other alternates as it takes advantage of the present highway location along the river valley, which has naturally recovered and adjusted to alteration of the landscape. The river frontage, interesting rock formations, and trees provide the highway user with pleasant surroundings along Alternate No. 1 which are not as desirable along the other routes.

h. PUBLIC UTILITIES

There will be no major effect on public utilities on any of the alternates. Portions of Alternates No. 2,3, and 4 are in areas with no utilities along them and Alternate No. 1 and portions of the other alternates along the present highway will not affect most existing utilities which are located far to the right or along the railroad right-of-way. Public utilities, where affected, will be perpetuated.



i. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

None of the alternates will affect public health and safety other than by providing safer transportation.

j. RESIDENTIAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER LOCATION

As this is a rural project, none of the alternates will affect residential or neighborhood character and location.

k. RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICES

The religious institutions and practices in the area will not be affected by any of the alternates.

l. CONDUCT AND FINANCING OF GOVERNMENT

There will be no appreciable effect on the conduct of government for any of the alternates. Although new right-of-way will have to be purchased, the least amount for Alternate No. 1, no appreciable effect is expected on the local tax base. New right-of-way (mainly grazing land) would be required along a considerable portion of the length of Alternates No. 2, 3, or 4, which could be avoided by constructing Alternate No. 1. A small amount of developed land near Careless Creek will be taken so that a dangerous curve may be eliminated. Preliminary estimates indicate that approximately six to eight acres of irrigated land will have to be purchased along segment AB (all alternates) and an additional two to three acres along segment BHKLJFM (Alternate No. 1 only).

m. CONSERVATION

There is no appreciable difference between the alternates relative to their effects on conservation. Wildlife and the general ecology of the area should not be significantly affected by any of the alternates. Erosion control methods will be employed on cut and fill slopes.

n. NATURAL AND HISTORIC LANDMARKS

Near the beginning of the project on all alternates, some old



buildings in poor condition exist which have been standing for some time. Widening of the present highway through this area may affect one or more of these buildings. This project does not affect any historic sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

o. NOISE, AIR, AND WATER POLLUTION

None of the alternates will have any appreciable effect on noise, air, or water pollution. Temporary and permanent erosion control methods will be employed on the project. Air pollution during construction will be minimized through the use of such methods as scrubbers on hot plants and dust control. Some noise pollution will be present during construction. Approved sanitary waste facilities will be used during the construction period.

p. PROPERTY VALUES

Some benefit to property values should be expected as the result of the new construction and improved service. It could be slightly more favorable to property along alternate routes 2, 3, and 4, because of the new access through the area.

q. MULTIPLE USE OF SPACE

Stock underpasses may have to be used on Alternates No. 2, 3, and 4, as justified by right-of-way negotiations. The river region along Alternate No. 1 is suitable for development of a roadside rest area.

r. REPLACEMENT HOUSING

No replacement housing will be needed for any of the alternates.

s. EDUCATION

Other than providing a safer and improved road for the school bus route, the educational system will not be affected.

t. DISPLACEMENT OF FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES

The displacement of families and businesses will not occur for any one of the alternates.

u. ENGINEERING, RIGHT-OF-WAY, AND CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF THE PROJECT AND RELATED FACILITIES

Engineering, right-of-way, and construction costs are different for the various alternates. Preliminary estimates of these costs are as follows:

Alternate No.	Construction Cost	R/W Cost	Utilities Cost	P.E., Construction Engineering, & Engineering	Total Estimated Cost
1.	\$1,231,059	\$16,709	-----	\$184,658	\$1,432,426
2.	1,418,816	24,937	-----	212,822	1,656,575
3.	1,195,140	27,769	-----	179,271	1,402,180
4.	1,055,545	27,893	-----	158,331	1,241,769

v. MAINTENANCE AND OPERATING COSTS

Maintenance and operating costs for any of the alternates will be similar to other two-lane primary highways in similar terrain.

w. OPERATION AND USE OF EXISTING HIGHWAY FACILITIES AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES DURING CONSTRUCTION AND AFTER COMPLETION

The present highway, U.S. 12, will be used for through traffic for any alternate chosen. The first part of all the alternates (from point A to point B) and the last part of all the alternates (from point F to point M) fall on the present highway so construction and movement of traffic would have to be planned and coordinated in these sections. The section from point B to point H on Alternates No. 1 and 2, the section of Alternate No. 2, JF, and the remaining portion of the present highway on Alternate No. 1, HKLJF, would also require coordination of construction activities and traffic. The portion of Alternate No. 2, HIJ, the portion of Alternate No. 3, BCGEF, and the portion of Alternate No. 4, BCDEF, are not on the present highway which would allow construction without disruption to the traffic.



If Alternate No. 2, 3, or 4 is constructed, the unimproved portion of the present highway, U.S. 12, will be used for local traffic.

C. THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

Alternate No. 1 is the recommended location for this project because preliminary estimates indicate it has the lowest total annual cost, provides the highest quality road, and provides suitable service for all road users without adding to the road system that has to be maintained, reconstructed, or operated upon.

V. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

In the vicinity of this project, both the short and the long term use of man's environment will be of an agricultural and ranching nature, due to the geography and climate of the land. This design complements these uses by fitting into the transportation plan of the area. Man's everyday traffic patterns will be momentarily affected slightly during construction, but will readjust to patterns similar to those on the present road. The small amount of acreage taken out of productivity by the construction of this project should not only be compensated for by payments for right-of-way taken, but by readjustment of this land use to provide for the enhancement of the long term productivity of the area.

VI. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

The land acquired for right-of-way will be taken out of production. The amount of land taken will have a minor effect on that remaining and should not appreciably affect the resources.

The quantities of gravel used in the road surfacing will be irretrievable resources furnished from a limited supply. Consideration will be given to an alternate surfacing section which could be used to conserve on gravel.



Steps taken to minimize the effect this project has on the environment will include: (1) the location and design will be developed to reduce environmental effects as much as possible; (2) temporary and permanent erosion control methods will be implemented; (3) cattle underpasses and access roads as justified will be provided to property owners; (4) irrigation and drainage pipes will be provided as justified; and (5) barbed wire fencing will be used, which will allow the passage of antelope and deer.



VII. DISCUSSION OF COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS CONTAINED IN THE PUBLIC HEARING TRANSCRIPT

1. Montana State Department of Health, Letter No. 1.

Comment: We note that there is mention of proper drainage in this project; however, we believe there could be an adverse environmental effect to the area. If any stagnant ponding areas are created by the construction, areas of this type will serve as ideal breeding spots for mosquitoes. In other words, we are concerned with depression areas that might be created by excavation or fill.

Discussion: By providing adequate drainage, ponding areas used as breeding grounds for mosquitoes will be minimized. (See Section II.B.).

2. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Letter No. 2.

Comment: The State of Montana is under the jurisdiction of our Denver Regional Office. Thus, your Draft Environmental Impact Statement has been sent to them for reply.

Discussion: No further comments were received.

3. Montana State Forester, Letter No. 3.

Comment: We have reviewed your impact statement for the Ryegate-East construction project. We have no additions or corrections to make to this statement.

Discussion: None.

4. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service, Letter No. 4.

Comment: None.

Discussion: None.

5. Montana Water Resources Board, Letter No. 5.

Comment: Deferred commenting to a later date. (See Letter No. 15).

Discussion: See Discussion for Letter No. 15.

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
JOSEPH NEALE
OF THE BOSTON BAR
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I.
BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY
JOSEPH NEALE, AT THE
CITY OF BOSTON, 1790.
AND SOLD BY
JOSEPH NEALE, AT THE
CITY OF BOSTON, 1790.

6. U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Letter No. 6.

Comment: None.

Discussion: None.

7. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Letter No. 7.

Comment: None.

Discussion: None.

8. U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines, Letter No. 8.

Comment: Bureau of Mines records indicate that the sporadic mineral output of Golden Valley County in recent years has been limited to small quantities of stone and sand and gravel. It is gratifying to note that the statement includes some comments on the limited mineral supply of the county, specifically gravel, in the section on irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. It is our conclusion that the project will not adversely affect or be affected by the mineral industry of the area.

Discussion: None.

9. Lower Musselshell Soil Conservation District, Letter No. 9.

Comments:

A. The Board is opposed to Alternate 1 which follows the alignment of the present highway. They feel that except for retaining the present road from the Cushman turnoff east to point "J" of Exhibit B, that the highway should be kept out of the valley. This is the area that has greater production potential and furthermore, it may mean realignment of the river which is a poor practice. Also, it appears that this routing may be the most difficult to construct because of restricted room between the bluff and the river.



B. The Board is in favor of Alternate No. 2 for the reasons stated in our letter to Ole Ueland, Executive Secretary, State Conservation Commission dated June 6, 1970. It appears that Alternate No. 2 would be probably the best route because the soils closer to the bluffs would present fewer construction and reclamation problems than the soils found further to the north.

C. The Board also wishes to make the following point regardless of what route is chosen. They feel that the highway design must call for adequate numbers of stock underpasses through the R/W as any of these routes will be dividing presently defined pasture. The Board suggests that the Commission consider developing stockwater on the south side of Alternate No. 2 as part of the purchase price for R/W from Mr. Garfield as the Alternate No. 2 route will leave him with a long, narrow, and dry pasture. This item might well save you a lot of time and grief.

D. Finally, the Board feels that on the west end of the project, that any additional R/W needed should come equally from the farmers and ranchers and from the railroad.

Discussion:

A. The effect of the taking of irrigated land for the project was considered. (See Section II.B.). By following the present road as much as possible, the right-of-way take for this project will be minimized. Approximately eight to eleven acres of irrigated land

will be required for right-of-way take. However, this project requires the least amount of right-of-way take of all the alternates, as it essentially follows the present road and makes maximum use of the existing right-of-way. Also, the value of the land along this project should be enhanced by the improved access a new road will provide. No major construction problems are anticipated for those sections of the road which will be built near the river. However, if minor infringement on the river is found to be necessary as the design of the project progresses, definite measures will be taken to minimize the effect the construction will have on the river.

B. The Lower Musselshell Soil Conservation District letter which this comment makes reference to was read before the fifth meeting of the Highway Joint Development Council held June 10, 1970. The Board of Supervisors of the Lower Musselshell Soil Conservation District were in favor of routing the project "through the upland", rather than along the river valley. Three alternates through the "upland" were studied. Design features such as soil and drainage conditions in the area, right-of-way, access, erosion control, and multiple-use such as stockpasses were mentioned in the District's communication. Each of these features were given consideration in the study of all of the alternates.

C. Alternate No. 2 would be the most expensive route to construct of the four alternates studied. At the Public Hearing held July 19, 1971, a representative of three of the ranchers owning land affected by all four alternates testified. It was brought out that ranch operations had been established around the present road. For

one landowner owning a major portion of the land adjacent to the alternate, it was testified that Alternate No. 2 would be the most detrimental to these ranching operations, and Alternate No. 1 the least detrimental.

Stockpasses will be built on this project wherever they are justified by right-of-way negotiations. Of all the alternates, however, Alternate No. 1 should require the least number of stockpasses because it segregates the least amount of grazing land.

D. The amounts and locations of land required for right-of-way will be determined during the design of the project.

10. Department of the Army, Omaha District, Corps of Engineers, Letter No. 10.

Comment: The potential alignments would have no effect upon existing Corps of Engineers projects or upon projects under consideration by this office. Structures for waterway crossings should be designed to provide adequate flow ways, thus not increasing flood hazards.

Alternates 3 and 4 appear to offer less detrimental aspects to the local setting, particularly the adjacent stretch of the Musselshell River, than Alternates 1 or 2. Construction activities associated with Alternate No. 1 in particular could have detrimental impacts on the Musselshell River environment associated with altering existing shore zone cover. It appears that Alternate No. 2 would affect the river, only in a very short stretch, but would present future vehicles a sharper curve at point B than is necessary.

Discussion: Drainage structures for this project will be designed

in accordance with standard design practices. Structures are usually designed for a fifty year flood.

The effects of the project on the aesthetics of the area were considered and are discussed in Section IV.B.4.g. of this statement.

The aesthetics of the area will not be severely affected by any of the alternates. By constructing the road along the natural contour of the land, by minimizing deep cuts and fills, and by employing erosion control, adverse aesthetic features will be minimized. Alternate No. 1 could result in better aesthetics than the other alternates as it takes advantage of the present highway location along the river valley, which has naturally recovered and adjusted to alteration of the landscape. The river frontage, interesting rock formations, and trees provide the highway user with pleasant surroundings along Alternate No. 1 which are not as desirable along the other routes.

As discussed in Section II.B., this project will have no appreciable effect on water pollution. Temporary and permanent erosion control methods will be employed. If necessary, riprap along the Musselshell River will be used to prevent bank erosion and resulting water pollution.

The curve at point B will be designed as flat as possible (approximately 4° 30') and still minimize right-of-way take of the developed land at that point.

11. U. S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey,
Letter No. 11.

Comment: We believe the water resources have been adequately

considered in the draft statement and that adequate measures are planned to minimize harm to the water resources. We find no reason to anticipate adverse lasting effects to the water resources of the area from any of the four alternates as proposed.

Discussion: None.

12. U. S. Department of Commerce, Letter No. 12.

Comment: None.

Discussion: None.

13. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Letter No. 13.

Comment: The Soil Conservation Service has no objections to this proposed work.

Discussion: None.

14. Montana Fish and Game Department, Letter No. 14.

Comment: No wildlife problems are anticipated on this project if it is implemented as planned.

Discussion: None.

15. Montana Water Resources Board, Letter No. 15.

Comment:

A. We feel that Alternate BIF would be the most satisfactory route alignment from an agricultural standpoint, recreational standpoint, and an economical standpoint. Recreation potential of the Musselshell River would definitely be enhanced if major traffic flows were routed across the upper route away from the river. This, of course, would

leave the existing P.T.W. as a "Recreation-Frontage Road" and would give greater opportunities to fishermen to more casually use the river area than to have steady flows of high speed traffic flowing directly adjacent to the river. We would also recommend that properties now owned by the Highway Department adjacent to the Musselshell River not be liquidated with new routes away from the river but be retained and kept on State ownership for future recreational uses. Economically, it would be advantageous to build this project on grazing land that would be away from the best agricultural land adjacent to the river bottom.

B. Route BIF would not intersect as many irrigation ditches as the lower river route.

C. All upper routes would be out of the flood plain. The lower river route, if built, would be within the flood plain and, therefore, riprap, straightening the channel, and vegetation removal would be necessary for proper construction.

D. At the Highway Joint Development Council meeting, on June 10, 1970, a Council Representative stated that Careless Creek was not being contemplated for dam construction or other recreational purposes. That statement still stands and unless other circumstances arise, no major changes will be made to Careless Creek.

Discussion:

A. Alternate BIF was determined to cost approximately \$224,000 more to construct than Alternate No. 1, the selected route for this project. As discussed in Section IV.B.4.1., the purchasing of the small amount of right-of-way is not expected to have an appreciable effect on the local tax base. Retaining the present road as a "Recreation-Frontage Road" separate from the improved highway facility might be desirable. However, Alternate No. 1 has the lowest annual cost, provides the highest quality road and provides suitable service for all road users without adding to the road system that has to be maintained,



reconstructed, or operated upon.

B. Irrigation ditches will be perpetuated as justified by right-of-way negotiations.

C. If necessary, riprap will be utilized where needed to prevent bank erosion where the road is near the river. If minor channel changes are needed, steps will be taken to minimize the effect the construction has on the river. Cut and fill slopes will be top-soiled and seeded.

D. No discussion.

16. U. S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Letter No. 16.

Comments:

A. The description of alternates should also include any particular environmental effects, considerations, or resources involved on that particular alternate.

B. Under III, DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS, A, the last paragraph states, "The Board of Supervisors of this agency were in favor of routing the project 'through the upland', rather than along the river valley." The question can be asked, why do they favor the upland route? Some discussion on this question would be helpful.

Discussion:

A. The particular environmental effects, considerations, or resources involved on the various alternates have been discussed in this statement under Section IV. Alternatives, in accordance with F.H.W.A. PPM 90-1.

B. The letter from the Board of Supervisors of the lower Musselshell Soil Conservation District referred to in this question did not state any reason for routing the project through the upland other than stating that it is "where it belongs". Some items and considerations for designing the project were mentioned, however.

These items have been discussed in this statement and in the discussion on the lower Musselshell Soil Conservation District's comments on the draft environmental statement. (See Section II.B. of this statement and discussion of comments for Letter No. 9.).

17. U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Letter No. 17.

Comment: It appears there has been no clear-cut comparison of the relative merits of each of the alternate routes discussed in the statement. For example, Section E states that the project would have no appreciable effect on patterns of behavior of wildlife species. Since wetlands, such as swamps and river bottoms, are considered to be the most productive for most wildlife species, it would seem that a location other than the present route along the river (Alternate No. 1) would have less impact on wildlife values.

However, based on the information available in the Environmental Impact Statement, we would prefer Alternate No. 2. It appears to have the least adverse impact on outdoor recreation resources. If this were selected, you might also wish to retain the existing road along the river, essentially Alternate No. 1, as a scenic and recreational route.

Discussion: Comparisons between the various alternates have been made and are discussed in Section IV, Alternatives of this statement. As stated in Section IV., this project should not have an appreciable effect on the wildlife and the general ecology of the area, nor would any of the other alternates that were considered.

A discussion of the recreation resources and this project's effect on these resources is contained in the discussion of comments for Letter No. 15.

18. Environmental Protection Agency, Letter No. 18.

Comment:

A. If Alternate 1 is chosen, the probability of degrading the quality of the Musselshell River during construction will be greatly increased. Procedures that the contractor will be required to implement in order to avoid water quality degradation should be established. In addition, a contingency plan to control accidental spills or discharges into the waterway should be formulated. The effects of increased turbidity on fish and other aquatic organisms should be described.

B. The method of disposal of sanitary wastes during the construction period should be discussed.

Discussion:

A. As stated in Section IV., this project should not have an appreciable affect on the wildlife and the general ecology of the area. If necessary, riprap will be utilized where needed to prevent bank erosion where the road is near the river. If minor channel changes are needed, steps will be taken to minimize the effect the construction has on the river. Accidental spills or discharges into the river will be minimized through careful construction practices.

B. As stated in Section IV.B.4.o., approved sanitary waste facilities will be used during the construction period.

19. Environmental Comments made at the Corridor Public Hearing held July 19, 1971, at Ryegate, Montana.

Comment: The majority of those present endorsed Alternate No. 1 as the route to be selected for this project. Alternates No. 2, 3, and 4 received criticism due to the adverse effect these alternates would have on grazing in the area, as these routes cut off stock from the

water that is available. It was requested that the route along the river (Alternate No. 1), if selected, be designed so as to minimize the right-of-way take through the developed land along this route. It was also requested that consideration be given to acquiring less than normal right-of-way width near some old buildings located near the beginning of all alternates. A representative of three of the ranchers owning land affected by all four alternates testified. It was brought out that ranch operations had been established around the present road. For one landowner owning a major portion of the land adjacent to the alternate, it was testified that Alternate No. 2 would be the most detrimental to these ranching operations, and Alternate No. 1 the least detrimental. It was mentioned that Alternate No. 1 would provide the best service to the local residents and would be the best route for truckers.

Discussion: Alternate No 2,3,and 4 would sever stock access to watering facilities. Extensive right-of-way negotiations for stock-passes and other remedies such as the possibility of drilling water wells would have to be pursued if one of these alternates were built. By building Alternate No. 1 (the selected route), however, the impact on the grazing and watering facilities should not be significant. The right-of-way take through the irrigated land along Alternate No. 1, the selected route, will be determined as the design of this project progresses. It appears that the project will affect one or more of the old buildings mentioned above, which are located near the beginning of the project. (See Section IV.B.4.n.). This project, however, does not affect any historic site listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Alternate No. 1 will provide suitable service to truckers and will provide the local residents with an improved facility with essentially the same access as now exists.



VIII. EXHIBITS

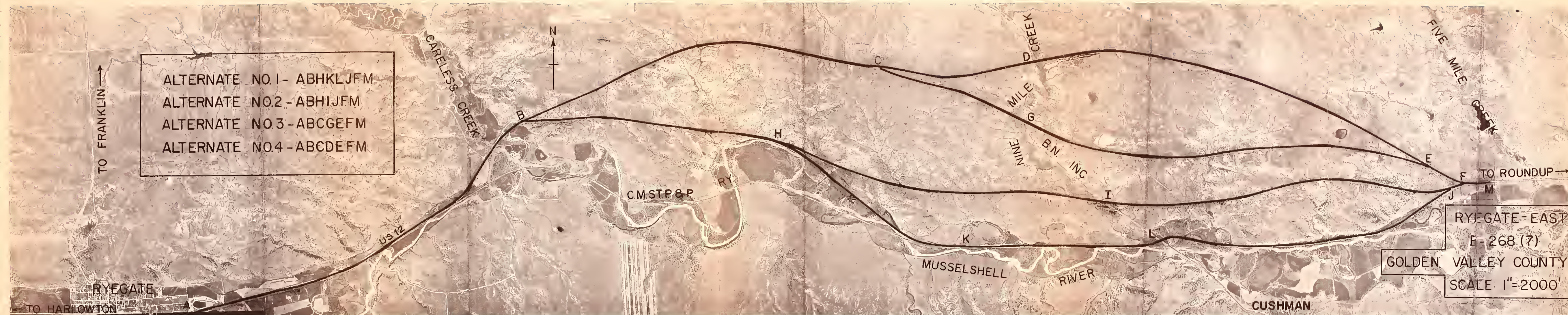


EXHIBIT B
MAP OF ALTERNATES



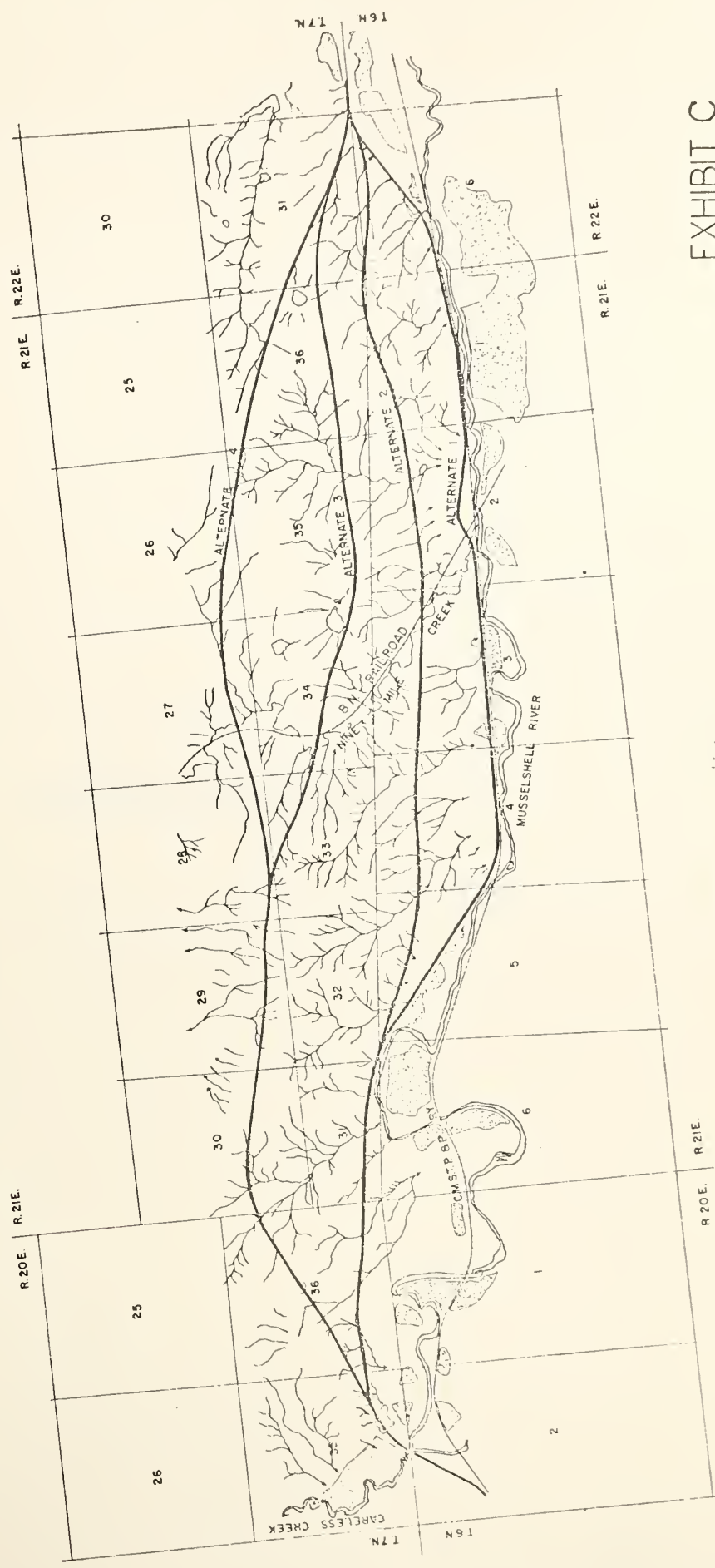


EXHIBIT C

IRRIGATION & DRAINAGE MAP
RYEGATE-EAST

IRRIGATED LAND -



EXHIBITS D.

LETTERS OF COMMENT ON
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

LETTER NO. 1



MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION

RECEIVED

JUN 28 1971

JOHN S. ANDERSON, P. E.
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

HELENA, MONTANA

State of Montana

State Department of Health

HELENA, MONTANA 59601

June 24, 1971

Lewis M. Chittim, P.E.
State Highway Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

33-JCU

Attention: Grover O. Powers, P. E.
Preconstruction Engineer

Re: F 268(7), Ryegate-East

Dear Mr. Chittim:

This is in regard to the above referenced project.

We note that there is mention of proper drainage in this project; however we believe there could be an adverse environmental effect to the area. If any stagnant ponding areas are created by the construction, areas of this type will serve as ideal breeding spots for mosquitoes. In other words, we are concerned with depression areas that might be created by excavation or fill.

Yours very truly,

Claiborne W. Brinck, P.E., Director
Division of Environmental Sanitation

CWB:VES:cp

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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ARCADE PLAZA BUILDING, 1321 SECOND AVENUE M/S 307

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98101

June 25, 1971

REGION X

Office of Metropolitan Planning
and Development

CO' MISSION

JUN 28 1971

HELENA, MONTANA

Mr. Lewis M. Chittim
State Highway Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Chittim:

Subject: F 268(7)
Ryegate - East

The State of Montana is under the jurisdiction of our Denver Regional Office. Thus, your Draft Environmental Impact Statement has been sent to them for reply.

Will you please note this in your mailing list. Their address is:

Department of Housing and Urban Development
Federal Office Building
19th and Stout Streets
Denver, Colorado 80202

Sincerely,

Ry Tanino
Engineer

cc: Eldon Halingsstad
Denver RO w/ incoming

Date Recd.	Preconst.	
6-27-71		
Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE
		30 GGP High
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		30 Sewer and Design
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		33 Traffic Dept
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		35 Hydraulics
		36 Traffic
		37 Public Hearing
		38 Surveying
		39 Consultant Design
		File

Act	Ind	Religion
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		Child Work
		Best Social Order
		Accounting
		Planning Energy
		Best Social Order
		Budget
		Production
		Right of Way
		Best Social Order
		Constructing
		Maintenance
		Materials
		Work
		Best Social Order





State of Montana

OFFICE OF STATE FORESTER

2705 SPURGIN ROAD
MISSOULA, MONTANA - 59801

LETTER NO. 3 36

GARETH C. MOON
STATE FORESTER

ROBERT W. ARNOLD
ASSISTANT STATE FORESTER

ORREST H. ANDERSON
GOVERNOR

June 29, 1971

05-HC

Mr. Grover O. Powers, P.E.,
Preconstruction Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana

Re: F 268(7)
Ryegate-East

Dear Mr. Powers:

We have reviewed your impact statement for the Ryegate-East construction project.

We have no additions or corrections to make to this statement.

Yours truly,

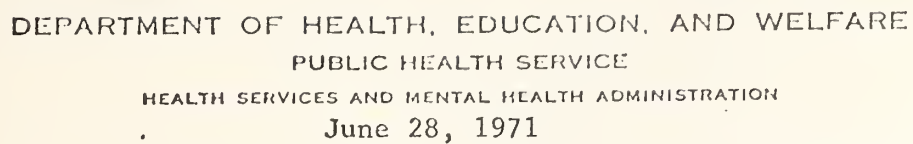
R. W. ARNOLD,
Assistant State Forester

RWA:lh

Date Recd. Preconst. 6-30-71	
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BILLINGS AREA
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE
3 SEVENTH STREET, WEST
P. O. BOX 2143
BILLINGS, MONTANA 59103

BILLINGS, MONTANA 59
MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION
RECEIVED
JUN 30 1971
HELENA, MONTANA

The Indian Health Service has received Draft Environmental Impact Statements from your office for two (2) projects, L 90-7 (18) 364 Big Timber - Greycliff and F 268 (7) Ryegate - East. Since neither of these projects are on or in close proximity to Indian land we have no comments to make.

Richard J. Anderson

Enclosures

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Area Office of Env'tl Health

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MONTANA WATER RESOURCES BOARD

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HUELSEN, MONTANA

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GOVERNOR FORREST H. ANDERSON, CHAIRMAN



WILBUR WHITE, VICE CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY, TWODOT
HOMER C. BAILEY, CORVALLIS
RILEY OSTBY, WOLF POINT

DOUGLAS G. SMITH, DIRECTOR, HELENA
EVERETT REDEEN, FORSYTH
JOSEPH B. REBER, HELENA

June 28, 1971

Mr. Lewis Chittim
Montana Highway Commission
Highway Building
Helena, Mt.

Dear Lew:

We have received your request for us to review your environmental consideration for the Ryegate - East Project.

This has been turned over to our "Environmental Impact Committee" and will be reviewed by the various disciplines within the Montana Water Resources Board. Our review will be back to you by August 1, 1971.

We appreciate having the opportunity to examine your considerations.

Sincerely,

MONTANA WATER RESOURCES BOARD

Douglas G. Smith
Director

MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION
RECEIVED
JUN 30 1971
HELENA, MONTANA

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

REGIONAL OFFICE, REGION 6
P. O. BOX 2553
BILLINGS, MONTANA 59103

JUL 1 1971

IN REPLY
REFER TO: 205

State Highway Commission
Attention: Mr. Grover O. Powers
Helena, Montana 59601

Gentlemen:

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on your environmental statement for F-268(7), Ryegate-East.

Since the Bureau's Deadman's Basin Unit is no longer being considered in our current plans for the development of the Musselshell Division, we will not have applicable comments to make on your environmental statement. We have not constructed nor do we have plans for constructing transmission lines in the Ryegate area.

Sincerely yours,

H.E. Aldrich

Regional Director

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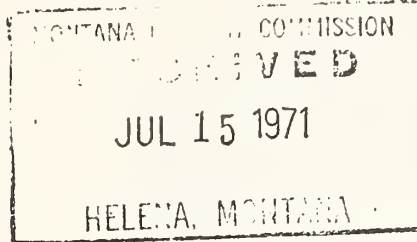
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF MINES

Intermountain Field Operation Center

BUILDING 20
DENVER FEDERAL CENTER
DENVER, COLORADO 80225

July 13, 1971

Office of
Chief



Mr. Lewis M. Chittim, P.E.
State Highway Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Chittim:

This is in reply to a letter from Grover O. Powers dated June 18 requesting review comments on a draft environmental statement on Ryegate-East, Project F-268 (7).

Bureau of Mines records indicate that the sporadic mineral output of Golden Valley County in recent years has been limited to small quantities of stone and sand and gravel. It is gratifying to note that the statement includes some comments on the limited mineral supply of the county, specifically gravel, in the section on irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. It is our conclusion that the project will not adversely affect or be affected by the mineral industry of the area.

Sincerely yours,

O. M. Bishop

O. M. Bishop, Chief
Intermountain Field Operation Center

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LETTER NO. 9

MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION
RECEIVED

JUL 16 1971

HELENA, MONTANA

LOWER MUSSELSHELL
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ROUNDUP, MONTANA

Box 428

RETURN TO	MAY BE REL'D	STATE HWY. ENGR	CHIEF COUNSEL	ASST. S.H.E. - ADMIN.	ACCOUNTING	PLANNING SURVEY	ASST. S.H.E. - FIELD	BRIDGE	PRECONSTRUCTION	RIGHT OF WAY	ASST. S.H.E. - DESIGN	CONSTRUCTION	BOULEVARD	OTHER
Info														
Act														

Lewis M. Chittim, P.E.
State Highway Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Chittim:

The Board of Supervisors in their July 13th meeting reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Project F 268(7) Ryegate East and have the following comments:

- 1) The Board is opposed to Alternate 1 which follows the alignment of the present highway. They feel that except for retaining the present road from the Cushman turnoff east to point "J" of Exhibit B, that the highway should be kept out of the valley. This is the area that has greater production potential and furthermore it may mean realignment of the river which is a poor practice. Also it appears that this routing may be the most difficult to construct because of restricted room between the bluff and the river.
- 2) The Board is in favor of Alternate 2 for the reasons stated in our letter to Ole Ueland, Executive Secretary, State Conservation Commission dated June 6, 1970. It appears that alternate 2 would be probably the best route because the soils closer to the bluffs would present fewer construction and reclamation problems than the soils found farther to the north.
- 3) The Board also wishes to make the following point regardless of what route is chosen. They feel that the highway design^{must} call for adequate numbers of stock underpasses through the R/W as any of these routes will be dividing presently defined pasture. The Board suggest that the Commission consider developing stock-water on the south side of Alternate 2 as part of the purchase price for R/W. from Mr. ~~Garfield~~ Garfield as the Alternate 2 route will leave him with a long, narrow, and dry pasture. This item might well save you a lot of time and grief.
- 4) Finally, the Board still feels that on the west end of the project that any additional R/W needed should come equally from the farmers and ranchers and from the railroad.

FOR THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

H. N. Tragitt
H. N. Tragitt
Acting Secretary
Lower Musselshell SWCD





DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OMAHA DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
7410 U.S. POST OFFICE AND COURT HOUSE
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102

MROED-DC

MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION

RECEIVED

JUL 23 1971

HELENA, MONTANA

16 July 1971

Mr. Grover O. Powers, P.E.
Preconstruction Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Powers:

I refer to your letter of 18 June 1971 transmitting the draft environmental statement for Montana Highway Project F268(7) Ryegate-East for our review. The potential alignments would have no effect upon existing Corps of Engineers projects or upon projects under consideration by this office. Structures for waterway crossings should be designed to provide adequate flow ways, thus not increasing flood hazards.

Alternates No. 3 and 4 appear to offer less detrimental aspects to the local setting, particularly the adjacent stretch of the Musselshell River, than Alternates No. 1 or No. 2. Construction activities associated with Alternate No. 1 in particular could have detrimental impacts on the Musselshell River environ associated with altering existing shore zone cover. It appears that Alternate No. 2 would affect the river, only in a very short stretch, but would present future vehicles a sharper curve at point B than is necessary.

Sincerely yours,

R. G. BURNETT
Chief, Engineering Division

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MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION
RECEIVED
JUL 22 1971
HELENA, MONTANA
uly 20, 1971

Your ref:
F 268(7)
Ryegate-East

State Highway Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Sir:

We have reviewed the environmental impact statement on Project F-268(7), Ryegate-East, as requested in your letter of June 18, 1971. We believe the water resources have been adequately considered in the draft statement and that adequate measures are planned to minimize harm to the water resources. We find no reason to anticipate adverse lasting effects to the water resources of the area from any of the four alternatives as proposed.

Yours very truly,

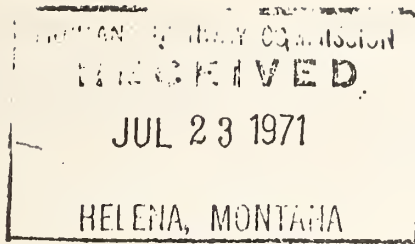
Wm. A. Lincoln

Hugh H. Hudson
Staff Hydrologist

cc:
District Chief, WRD, Helena, Montana
G. H. Davis, WRD, Washington, D.C.
Code 4300 0016 w/copy statement

[illegible]





THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230



July 12, 1971

Mr. Grover O. Powers
Preconstruction Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Powers:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter transmitting a document entitled "Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Ryegate-East F 268(7)".

The National Environmental Policy Act, as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality, requires each Federal agency contemplating a major action which may have a significant impact on the environment to prepare a draft environmental impact statement.

Full participation by the Federal "lead agency" in the preparation and/or review of each draft environmental impact statement prior to its release is essential to conform with the spirit and letter of the Act as required by the CEQ guidelines published in the Federal Register on April 23, 1971 (Vol. 36, No. 79). Therefore, it is the policy of this Department to refrain from commenting under the Act on any document, regardless of how titled, unless the lead agency has either prepared or reviewed and officially released the document as a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

For this reason, we offer no comments on the report which you sent us. Undoubtedly, your comments will be most helpful to the lead agency in its preparation of the required draft environmental impact statement, which it will send to us for review and comment.

Sincerely,

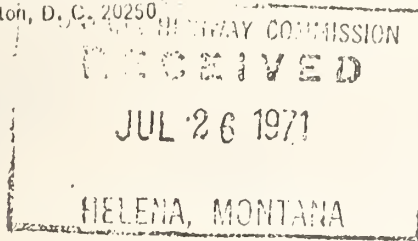
Sidney R. Galler
Sidney R. Galler
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Environmental Affairs



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Washington, D. C. 20250



Mr. Lewis M. Chittim
State Highway Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Re: Draft environmental impact
statement for Montana Project
F 268(7) Ryegate-East in
Golden County.

Dear Mr. Chittim:

The draft environmental impact statement for the above referenced project that was sent to Dr. T. C. Byerly on June 18, 1971, was referred to the USDA, Soil Conservation Service for review and comment.

The Soil Conservation Service has no objections to this proposed work. We can provide technical assistance on the soil types on the alternate routes proposed which may be helpful in determining the final location of the highway. The Service can also provide technical assistance on erosion control measures and drainage problems that may be encountered during and following the construction phase.

Excellent guidelines are given in the Federal Highway Administration Instruction Memorandum 20-6-67 dated December 29, 1967, for measures to minimize soil erosion and pollution from sedimentation caused by construction.

This draft impact statement is being sent to Mr. A. B. Linford, our State Conservationist located at Federal Building, P. O. Box 970, Bozeman, Montana 59715, for his information and use.

Sincerely,

Acting Administrator



LETTER NO. 14

STATE OF MONTANA



DEPARTMENT OF

FISH AND GAME

Helena, Montana 59601
July 27, 1971

MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION
RECEIVED
JUL 28 1971
HELENA, MONTANA

Mr. Lewis M. Chittim
State Highway Engineer
Montana Highway Department
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Lew:

We have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Project F 268(7), Ryegate-East, as requested.

No wildlife problems are anticipated on this project if it is implemented as planned.

Sincerely,

FRANK H. DUNKLE
STATE FISH AND GAME DIRECTOR

By

RALPH W. BOLAND, ASSISTANT CHIEF
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES DIVISION

RWB/sd

cc: Department of Planning
and Economic Development
Fletcher Newby

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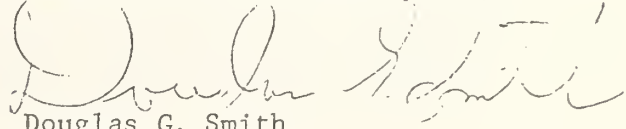
Mr. Lewis M. Chittim
Montana Highway Commission
Page 2

We do wish to reemphasize that the Montana Water Resources Board does have additional calculations concerning stream flows available to your staff for hydraulics design.

We do wish to thank you for the opportunity to review this Environmental Impact Statement and hope that final copies are made available for our files.

Sincerely,

MONTANA WATER RESOURCES BOARD


Douglas G. Smith
Director

DGS/DM/bb

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

MONTANA HIGHWAY CO. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 RECEIVED FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
 JUL 29 1971
 HELENA, MONTANA
 DATE: July 28, 1971
 In reply refer to: 08-24 DB

DATE: July 28, 1971

In reply refer to: 08-24 DB

By: RNJ

Our Regional Environmental Committee has reviewed the subject project draft environmental statement. Following are comments for your consideration in preparing the final environmental statement:

- (1) The description of alternates should also include any particular environmental effects, considerations, or resources involved on that particular alternate.
- (2) Under III, DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS, A, the last paragraph states, "The Board of Supervisors of this agency were in favor of routing the project 'through the upland', rather than along the river valley." The question can be asked, why do they favor the upland route? Some discussion on this question would be helpful.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]





RECEIVED
AUG 7 1951
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BUREAU
HELENA, MONTANA

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION
1000 SECOND AVENUE
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98104

AUG 3 1971

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Lewis M. Chittim, P.E.
State Highway Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Chittim:

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Ryegate-East Project F-268(7), as was received with your letter dated June 18, 1971, has been reviewed by our staff.

It appears there has been no clear-cut comparison of the relative merits of each of the alternate routes discussed in the statement. For example, Section E states that the project would have no appreciable effect on patterns of behavior of wildlife species. Since wetlands, such as swamps and river bottoms, are considered to be the most productive for most wildlife species, it would seem that a location other than the present route along the river (Alternate No. 1), would have less impact on wildlife values.

However, based on the information available in the Environmental Impact Statement, we would prefer Alternate No. 2. It appears to have the least adverse impact on outdoor recreation resources. If this were selected, you might also wish to retain the existing road along the river, essentially Alternate No. 1, as a scenic and recreational route.

Sincerely yours,

[illegible]

Maurice H. Lundy
Regional Director

Regional Director



REGION VIII

ENVIRONMENTAL
MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION
RECEIVED
AUG 16 1971
HELENA, MONTANA

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INTERVIEW
ANALYSIS

Dear Mr. Chittim:

1. If Alternative 1 is chosen, the probability of degrading the quality of the Musselshell River during construction will be greatly increased. Procedures that the contractor will be required to implement in order to avoid water quality degradation should be established. In addition, a contingency plan to control accidental spills or discharges into the waterway should be formulated. The effects of increased turbidity on fish and other aquatic organisms should be described.

2. The method of disposal of sanitary wastes during the construction period should be discussed.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely yours,

Donald P. Dubois
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: Neil Orloff, EISO

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